

Hon. Vernon S. Broderick
United States District Judge
Southern District of New York
Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, NY 10007

October 31, 2019

Dear Judge Broderick,

I write you regarding United States v. Christopher Collins.

This subject is very personal and also very relevant to me. I live in NY-27, the former district of Chris Collins. I have known Chris since 2015 when I met with him and his staff to discuss issues relevant to my nonprofit organization and our community at large. Chris was genuine and helpful, a real champion of Boy Scouts and many other service-oriented groups.

It was surprising to learn that Chris had been indicted for insider trading. His subsequent guilty plea has troubled me greatly. I have mixed feelings about the affair and, as much is at stake for Chris, would like to share them with the court.

In Erie County, NY, Chris is not a popular figure. His political views – small government, low taxes, and minimal regulations on businesses – frequently pitted him against other leaders. Back when he was county executive, Chris balanced the budget by cutting services rather than raising taxes. These cuts included library, museum, and cultural organization funding as well as reductions in the numbers of county employees. At the time, Erie County provided nurses to the Buffalo Public Schools. My mother, an elementary school nurse, was one of the hundreds of county employees who were laid off. It was a difficult time for my family and many other families in the community.

Simultaneously, budget cuts to museums and art galleries led to a downsizing of the cultural and tourism employment sector – my current field. Though this was in 2010, local organizations still refer to this as ‘The Dark Times.’ Some groups laid off staff, reduced hours, or closed. My organization needed a large loan to get through the year.

In 2011, representatives from my nonprofit organization – a fossil park and nature reserve – met with Chris and his staff and explained the economic and tourism benefits of our efforts as well as the hardship created by his cuts. Chris explained that his financial decisions resulted from mismanagement of the budget by previous administrations. He said that he would restore our funding and help us move forward. True to his word, he did. In fact, he increased our funding over the previous level to 1) help us recover from the previous year and 2) assist in the development of our organization beyond our current capacity. Today, thanks to this funding – which is still in the Erie County budget – we welcome 20,000 visitors annually while employing two full time staff and 17 part time staff.

Ultimately, however, the voters felt that the damage had been done. Chris lost the next county executive election but was voted into congress in 2012. Despite the change in scenery, Chris continued to support my organization through donations for our fundraising efforts. He regularly met with our leadership to identify funding opportunities and offer advice critical to our growth and planning. At one point, early in my career here, I was meeting with Chris and his staff more often than my own family! This did not go over well with my mother.

As I explained to my family, I often felt like there were two versions of Chris Collins. The public figure was brash, vocal, and unapologetic. He was not afraid to complain about his political opponents or throw fuel on the fire of some issue that had come up in the media. He also endorsed candidates whose values I felt were not in line with my own.

Privately, however, Chris was a different person. He was a nice and genuine human being. He was a listener, a helper, and a problem solver. He cared deeply for his constituents. Oftentimes, he would go to great lengths to help our organization with donations such as luxury suite tickets to sporting events. These were always the top prize at our annual fundraiser. While we recognized Chris with a letter or mentioned his support in our newsletter, it was clear that he did not expect anything in return for his help. We are a small nonprofit in the scheme of things, and in the political sense, it was a mostly one-sided relationship. However, this did not prevent Chris from continuing to support us for what is now 10 years.

Unfortunately, Chris committed a serious crime. I cannot explain his actions, nor can I empathize with him in any way. He broke the law and I am wholly disappointed.

Prior to his crime, Chris was actively involved in the Boy Scouts of America. As a former Boy Scout myself, I recognize that Chris has also violated the Scout Law which states that a scout is, first among all things, trustworthy. I suspect that, in addition to his resignation from Congress, Chris will lose his advisory status with the Boy Scouts as well.

This burden will be heavy for Chris. As an elderly man already, he will carry his disgrace beyond prison and through his final days. Chris likely will never return to politics or scouts, or serving any community group for that matter. It saddens me to think of him as such a diminished figure, but these are the consequences of his actions. It is ironic: for someone who so valued public life, Chris has already dealt himself the most severe punishment that could be imposed.

I thank you for reading this letter and for considering my testimonial.

Sincerely,



Philip J. Stokes, PhD

[REDACTED]
Blasdell, NY 14219

Hon. Vernon S. Broderick
United States District Judge
Southern District of New York
Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, NY 10007

Re: United States v. Christopher Collins

Dear Judge Broderick,

I am a corporate and finance attorney who chaired the corporate department of Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler and engaged in state government activities, including as a member of the Commission on Judicial Nominations for New York's highest court and chairing the state's parks council and the state university's finance, charter school and community college committees as well as its construction fund, before turning more to politics, and among other political activities, chairing Senator McCain's New York presidential campaign and subsequently the New York Republican State Committee for ten years following my 2009 election. In these political activities, I came to know Chris personally and as a political person from the time he burst on the New York political scene as a successful entrepreneurial businessman running as a surprise Republican candidate for County Executive of Erie County invited by a county party desperate for a presentable candidate in a two to one Democratic County.

Chris ran on a pledged to implement the business efficiency discipline known as Lean Six Sigma to turn around the county finances and rebuild the county infrastructure. While "Implement Lean Six Sigma!" was an improbable political battle cry, Chris' successful and clean business career, dedication to saving jobs in a declining Western New York, energy and sincerity carried the day in a stunning upset, winning 63% of the vote.

And as he ran, so he governed a bankrupt county with finances controlled by a state fiscal control board, infrastructure falling apart, beaches closed and parks neglected. Working with a Democratic Buffalo mayor, he got his Lean Six Sigma adopted by a 12 to 3 Democrat county legislature. For the first time in the United States, Lean Six Sigma was implemented in a large municipal government with great results: a \$250 million surplus, the state fiscal control board disbanded, county debt and pension obligations paid down, infrastructure and parks repaired and beaches reopened. Following through on his pledge to be a chief executive officer and not a chief politician, he hired and empowered his commissioners on a pure merit basis and held them accountable with great results for the people of Erie County. When emergencies happened, such as a potential hepatitis outbreak or a 100 year flood, Chris was on the job with pragmatic energy and creative solutions for immediate problems for which he is rightly proud.

These tremendous accomplishments could not have been achieved without Chris' passionate dedication to results oriented public service for his Western New York community and without his strength of character, integrity of purpose and candor in both professional and personal relationships — traits which also guided his successful business career and guide his personal and family life. These are the character traits that one would expect from being raised in a General Electric family in the 1950's and educated as a North Carolina State engineer with a University of Alabama MBA.

These character traits can also result in deeds or unintentional words which cross lines and which a politically correct experienced politician would avoid. Chris from time to time crossed these lines to his ultimate political regret, but felt justified by the good substantive results or distainful about his words "twisted by knaves" which can be the expected treatment of a fiscally and socially conservative Republican rising star mentioned as a potentially formidable gubernatorial candidate in a very blue state.

But crossing a criminal line, whether intentional or not, and harming his family in the impulsive criminal act has horrified Chris not just in the expected punishment or reputational damage but in his conservative core values. Beyond remorse, the question "how could I have done that?" will haunt Chris for the rest of his life.

Sincerely,

Edward F. Cox



Electric Equipment Corporation



HEAD SUPPLY
Division of Volland Electric



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11/13/2019

Hon. Vernon S. Broderick
United States District Judge
Southern District of New York
Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, NY 10007

Re: United State v. Christopher Collins

Dear Judge Broderick,

I am writing this letter as a character reference for Christopher Collins, whom I have known as a friend and business partner for 18 years.

I met Chris while attending an entrepreneurial leadership class at the University of Buffalo. Chris volunteered his time serving as a reactor to help the students. I took note that he was spending significant personal time to help ensure their success. After meeting Chris and talking about my company, I approached him about becoming a partner in our family business. At the time, we were struggling to be profitable. Through his insight, we were able to turn things around quickly. This obviously benefitted our employees and their families. We went on to purchase three other troubled companies, effectively saving and/or creating many jobs.

Chris has done a lot of volunteer work with The Boy Scouts and is an Eagle scout himself. In 2008 he ran for and won the office of Erie County Executive here in New York. Chris ran our county in a highly effective manner, making changes that we still are benefiting from today. He donated his salary to various worthy charities in Erie County. In 2012, he won the race for the 27th District in the United States House of Representatives. Chris ignored the partisan politics that handicap government and did an excellent job representing his constituents.

I don't know the details of what happened with Chris and Innate Therapeutics. I do know that what he has pled to is completely out of character from my personal dealings with Chris. I suspect he must have panicked following receipt of bad news and acted to protect his son, like many imperfect human fathers would do in a similar situation. Chris has always been a good family man who has spent a large portion of his life helping others.

Thank you for considering this personal account of my relationship with Chris Collins.

Sincerely,

E. Ronald Graham
Chairman/CEO

Paul J Harder

██████████

Lakeview, NY 14085

11/18/19

The Hon. Vernon S Broderick
United States District Judge
Southern District Of New York
Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, NY 10007

Dear Judge Broderick;

It is my personal pleasure to write to you concerning Christopher C Collins who I have known for over 30 years.

I first met Chris in the Young Presidents Organization in the 1980's. We never became social friends but through respect for our business dealings we had a friendship. Chris has been a strong contributor to the Western NY business community in his unique way. He provided vast amounts of his personal time assisting entrepreneurs he had met both through YPO and The Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership at the University of Buffalo. This commitment to our community helped keep and grow employment in Western NY.

He is an active supporter of Boy Scouts both on a local and national level. His investments in the community through Ellicott Development and the Sinatra Group have helped to keep the momentum of Western NY growing and expanding. His personal investments in a variety of western NY businesses have provided high paying jobs in our community.

When Chris decided to run for political office I supported him because as County Executive I knew that he would bring a business vision to the administration of Erie county services. He was very successful in streamlining county services and in many cases providing higher level of service at lower costs to the county taxpayers.

His run for the 27th Congressional district was driven by a desire to become the go to congressman in upstate NY. He wanted to continue to serve his community even though it was a burden both to his family life and his business interests. I was his finance chair for his first three congressional terms. Because of this I had an insiders view of how Chris functioned as the 27th Congressman. In his time as County Executive he demonstrated that he made decisions not based on how the political wind was blowing but from his heart. Chris always made his decisions on what he believed was the overall best

11/18/19

benefit to his constituents. Although this proved to be his undoing in the County Executive role, he continued to do what he believed right in his role as Congressman.

Thank you for your time and consideration.


Paul J Harder

FaegreBD.com

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November 19, 2019

Hon. Vernon S. Broderick
United States District Judge
Southern District of New York
Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, NY 10007

Re: United States v. Christopher Collins

Dear Judge Broderick:

I am writing today in support of my friend and former colleague Congressman Chris Collins. I thank you in advance for any consideration you give to these thoughts.

Chris and I were elected to Congress together in the fall of 2012. During our service together, I believe I came to know him quite well. I have traveled with Chris and members of his family on federal congressional delegation trips to foreign nations. I have eaten meals with Chris on numerous occasions. We have had dozens of private conversations on the House floor.

I am in no position to judge the merits of legal proceedings referenced above. Frankly, I did not follow them in detail. I am aware of the allegations but have no direct knowledge of the underlying facts in question. Throughout the proceedings, my only thoughts regarding the matter were thoughts for Chris and his family. After all, they are our friends, and my wife and I were sad to hear that they were in any trouble.

However, I do believe I am in position to offer thoughts on Chris's character. Chris has a big personality. Without question, he is a talker. But, in my seven plus years of knowing Chris, my overriding impression of him was this: Chris is a good man, who loves his family and wants to make a difference for his country. Chris Collins is a loyal friend. And, Chris Collins has experienced an extraordinary career of service as both a business man and an elected office holder.

People often wonder what elected leaders talk about behind the curtain. What are they really like when no one is watching? In the literally dozens of conversations that I've had with Chris over the years, our talks were almost always focused on our families – pride in the achievements of our kids and hopes for their future, concern and love for our spouses, the joy of time spent together at family events.

We all make mistakes. I am in no position to judge what Chris was thinking during the events that led up to his conviction. But I do know he is remorseful for his actions. He has told me so directly. And, I know that people can often make mistakes when trying to look out for their friends and family.

Maybe most importantly, I am convinced that, if given the opportunity, Chris has more to offer to his family and nation. Chris is a very talented person with a big heart. His family is a great family. If given the opportunity, I sincerely believe they will give back more than they receive.

Thanks again for your consideration of this letter and for your service to our nation.

Very truly yours,



Luke Messer
Former Member of Congress
Indiana's 6th Congressional District

November 27, 2019

Hon. Vernon S. Broderick
United States District Judge
Southern District of New York
Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, NY 10007

Re: United States V. Christopher Collins

Dear Judge Broderick:

It has been my pleasure to know Chris and Mary Collins for 25 years. While they have been very private about their philanthropy efforts in Western NY, I know firsthand about their kindness and generosity. Chris has worked tirelessly for Boy Scouts for many years. His generous donations to the Greater Niagara Frontier Region have helped many young men in our area who never would have been able to attend Boy Scouts, much less earn the rank of Eagle Scout. For years, Chris and Mary have sponsored and/or attended multiple fundraisers for BSA, as well as supporting individual BSA Troops and many other sanctioned BSA functions, touching the lives of countless people. Our region has happily been on the receiving end of Chris' generosity and our region and young men are better for his many gifts.

Attending numerous charity fundraisers with Chris and Mary, it's been my experience they always donate monetarily as well as their time. To name just a few of the many charities they support:

Maria Love Foundation
Suneel's Light Foundation
Junior League of Buffalo
Greater Buffalo Youth Orchestra Foundation
Boy Scouts of America (BSA)
Oishei Children's Hospital
Salvation Army

In addition to the many charities Chris and Mary support, I know firsthand about two women in the area who fell on hard times when they divorced. One woman had four children and had to leave an abusive husband, the other woman had one child and her husband left her homeless and penniless. Chris helped both women and their children secure safe housing and helped with their many bills for years.

Thank you Judge Broderick for the opportunity to express my many positive experiences of generosity and good will with Chris and Mary Collins.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathi Sullivan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kathi" and last name "Sullivan" clearly legible.

Kathi Sullivan

[REDACTED]
Williamsville, NY 14221
[REDACTED]

12/9/19 9:09 PM

Dear Judge Broderick –

I am a Family Physician, live in Clarence, NY and have known Chris Collins and his family for 26 years now. They are neighbors and our children have grown up together. Chris has always been an out spoken guy and some may perceive this as arrogant, they would be wrong. He uses his voice and "power" for good. He is the first to volunteer to help if anyone needs help getting an internship or job. He has been a very successful businessman in our area and surrounding area and he provided many jobs for locals. He was active in the boy scouts and in helping his son achieve his Eagle Scout badge. As Erie County Executive he improved our community and made life better for all of us living here. He was immediately on site and a calming presence during the flight 3407 crash that rocked this town. As a Congressman he opened his Washington office to the Buffalo youths in an attempt to help those interested in getting ahead in their personal lives.

What he did was wrong and he has expressed his remorse in how his actions have negatively affected his community, friends and family. There is so much that Chris could continue to do to help his community and I would think that would be a much better punishment for him and benefit for the community than putting him our overcrowded jails. This would add to the burden of the taxpayers and be wasting the talents that Chris could continue to use to help the community that he let down.

I thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
Lori Luzi MD

Todd Rokita

Attorney-At-Law

Tel [REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]

5868 E. 71st Street, Suite E-202
Indianapolis IN 46220

Honorable Vernon S. Broderick
United States District Judge
Southern District of New York
Thurgood Marshall United States Court House
40 Foley Square
New York, NY 10007

November 9, 2019

RE: United States v. Christopher Collins

Dear Judge Broderick,

Thank you for your time in reading my letter in the above-referenced matter. I am a recently retired 4-term Member of the United States Congress. Before that I served as Indiana's 59th Secretary of State, the 3rd highest state-wide elected official in the state. Before that I practiced law as a litigator finding myself in state and federal courts almost every week. For the last 25 years I have held an active law license and have been duly admitted to practice in all Indiana state courts, the Northern and Southern Indiana Federal District Courts, the 7th Circuit Appellate Court and the United States Supreme Court. I am a member of the Indiana Bar in good standing and I have never had any kind of action against my license.

While I was Indiana Secretary of State, a significant part of my duties focused on combatting white collar crime. In short, I held supplemental and dual jurisdiction with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and we often worked together on case investigations. During my 8 years as Secretary of State, I saw the worst of the worse -- thieves in every respect. I am proud of the fact that we "threw the book" at

these characters, earning them over 600 years of jail time, in the aggregate, during my 8 year tenure. I have little patience for people that take advantage of others in this way.

I have known Mr. Chris Collins for about the last seven years. Given my experience in fighting white collar crime, it is an understatement to say that I am surprised about the allegations made against Chris. I do understand that there has been a plea agreement in the case, and so I am not going to argue his guilt or innocence, since that is immaterial at this point.

I would say, however, that in the seven years I have known Chris, I have known him to be honest and direct. In fact, I have known him to be honest to the point of recklessness, which in the halls of the U.S. Congress can really rub people the wrong way. But that didn't matter to Chris, and in some way now, he may be paying the price for that. I do believe that the charges in Chris' case, to the extent I am aware of them, are completely out of character and are otherwise an aberration of his character.

Chris and I worked on the several pieces of legislation together and we helped each other with those legislative goals. Chris and I also spent a good deal of time together investigating the work of the National Science Foundation, which was work that he and I both knew well and took particular interest in given the prominent institutions of higher education our districts contained.

I always found him constructive and solution-seeking-- the hallmark of a good legislator and a good leader. It was always hard to talk with Chris without him bragging about his district and the people in it. I felt he truly cared about his job and doing the best by his constituents, whether they voted for him or not. I always felt that Chris served with a servant's heart and I certainly would not say that about all of our colleagues.

I think Chris has a lot left to give his community and society in general. I hope that this Court receives this, and other like evidence, and values it in a way that would allow Chris to continue serving his family, community and nation in some capacity so that we may continue to benefit from his leadership.

Thank you again, your Honor, for reading this letter in support of Chris Collins.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Rokita". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Todd" and last name "Rokita" clearly distinguishable.

Todd Rokita

Member, U.S. Congress (2011-2019)

Cc: Jonathan Barr, BakerHostetler

November 10, 2019

Hon. Vernon S. Broderick
United States District Judge
Southern District of New York
Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, NY 10007

RE: United States v. Christopher Collins

Dear Judge Broderick:

I have known Chris Collins since 2006 when I met him through the SUNY at Buffalo's Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership ("CEL") program. Chris had been a volunteer mentor for the organization which assisted small business owners in the area.

In 2008 I went to work for his administration when he was Erie County Executive. The experience was amazing to say the least. Chris was a beacon of knowledge and integrity. I was honored to work for a man who was loyal and demanded that we make the best decisions for the constituents while always following the law and doing the right thing.

Chris didn't care about my political affiliation, he was looking for someone from the private sector to help him make Erie County a better place to work and live. I believed that he truly cared about the people and not the power.

Chris was a hard worker who led by example. We all had a passion for what we did and were proud that we worked for a man who wanted to make a difference in our community.

I will always be grateful for the experience of working for Chris however I am honored to be his friend. Above all, he is a good husband and father who I know to be an honorable man with integrity.

Thank you for considering my letter.

Respectfully,

Michelle DeBergalis

Michelle DeBergalis